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Chapter IX

MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

The Kols are fundamentaly a primitive tribe, even though they have been for many years in contact with Hindu thought and life. It will be found therefore that they have outlooks which are properly termed animistic. This does not necessarily imply that their thought forms are simple and that a 'primitive' people have a 'primitive' outlook. Kol thought, though not philosophic, is complex and involved, and has behind it a long history. These beliefs are not limited to 'primitive' people either, but are shared with other groups living about them, and extend up into the very fabric of the thinking of intelligent Indians.

There are certain forces which are opposing this point of view, such as education, travel, books, and modern inventions, to say nothing of contacts with higher Hinduism and the political movements of the day. There are many ancient institutions such as caste, the authority of the Brahmins, and idolatry, which are being questioned at the present time; and these questionings have their repercussions among the villages and tend toward a sophisticated attitude toward many of the beliefs described below.

There are other forces which aid in the maintenance of animistic outlooks: ignorance of what is going on tends toward the *status quo*; women among the Kols are universally illiterate and are the stronghold of the old ways. Many a Kol says that he puts on charms for his wife's sake, but adds that he really does not believe that they do much good. Custom is another force very difficult to move. It is very strong over India and its persistence, in spite of knowledge to the contrary, is a thing which strikes an observer. Belief may change, but custom, though rationalized, remains as before.

A word of caution should be uttered concerning generalities in regard to animistic thought. There are few, if any, perfectly consistent generalizations which may be made concerning Kol beliefs and outlooks. For example, when the spirit world is described, one should not immediately conclude that *all* Kols enter into these concepts, any more than one should judge that all westerners regard the number thirteen with superstitious fear.

The Spirit World. To the average Kol all things animate and inanimate may be the abode of spirits of one sort or another.

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104 **Jāman** Fruit from the *Eugenia jambolana*.

Janmāsā or Janwāsā The tarrying-place of the bridegroom and his party during their stay at the bride's village.

Jawārā One of the most important of the Kol festivals. Associated with sowing season.

Jeṭha The second Hindu month: May-June. The eldest; feminine form *Jeṭhi*.

Jhaṇḍā Flag.

Jhāṛnā To sweep; to exorcise.

Jhopṛī A rude hut.

Jind The spirit of a deceased Mohammedan.

Jīrā Cummin seed, *Cuminum cyminum*.

Juār The millet *Sorghum vulgare*.

Kabbis An evil spirit said to suck blood.

Kabīrī A particular type of song, often obscene.

Kachhā or kachchā Unripe; not strong; temporary.

Kājra Lamp-black.

Kālī A goddess, the wife of Śiva.

Kalśa An earthenware vessel.

Kaṅkan Coloured beads strung on an iron wire.

Kans The grass *Saccharum spontaneum*.

Kaṇwar A bamboo pole with a basket slung from the ends.

[812] **Karma** The postulate that one reaps according as he sows and that the events of the present life were determined by the deeds of the previous ones.

Kartāl A cluster of cymbals.

Kārtika The seventh Hindu month: October-November.

Karowār (Karwā) Oil from the mustard plant *Brassica juncea*.

Kathā A sacred story sung at time of worship.

Kaṭhautā A wooden dish used by a group of Kols.

Kaṭhotā See *Kaṭhauta*.

Kathrī Mattress, quilt.

Kaṭlī A teasing song

Khaḍga A sword.

Khair Gum from the *Acacia catechu*.

Khairwār The tree *Acacia catechu*.

Khajleniā A religious festival.

Khajūr The wild date palm *Phoenix sylvestris*.

[804] **Khaṇḍī** A measure of grain. Varies, but around Jubbulpore is about two hundred pounds.

Khaṛaū Spiked sandals.

Kharī Ashes remaining after cremation, chalk.

Kārighaṭ The place at the river where the ashes are thrown.

Khaschas Poppy seed.

Khaṭiyā A rude country cot.

Khichṛī A food made of rice and pulse boiled together.

Khīr Rice boiled in milk.

Khodnā To dig.